

FARMER PANEL – WHAT HAY QUALITY MEANS TO ME

Clayton Geraldts – Hart County Hay Producer

Clayton Geraldts runs a commercial hay farm in Hart County near Munfordville, Kentucky. His total farm size is 630 acres, 350 of which are leased. The focus of his operation is producing small square bales for the horse market. Clayton currently grows a range of forage species including 500 acres of alfalfa and alfalfa/orchard grass and 130 acres of timothy and orchard grass. On average he puts up 100,000 small square bales a year.

Ben Cox – Taylor County Hay Producer

Ben Thomas Cox, A 1978 graduate of Western Kentucky University and 1982 grad of Auburn University School of Veterinary Medicine. He owns and operates Crossroads Animal Clinic in Campbellsville Kentucky. A three man mixed animal practice. In his spare time he manages a 300 acre Registered Angus and Gelbvieh operation. He currently has 80 mother cows and raises 30 acres of alfalfa and 75 acres of soybeans annually. He is married to Regina and has three children.

John McCoy – Warren County Hay Producer

John McCoy and his wife, Sherry, own 214 acres in south Warren County near Bowling Green, Kentucky. They maintain 100-125 registered Simmental cattle. They produce 120 acres of forage, including 100 acres of alfalfa and alfalfa/orchard grass and 20 acres of orchard grass. John is a Purple Heart veteran of the Vietnam War.

Dennis Wright – Logan County Hay Producer

Dennis Wright farms approximately 350 acres with his sons, Wesley and John, in the south east corner of Logan county. Our operation includes 5 acres dark fired tobacco, 15 acres burley, 230 acres of row crop and 80 acres alfalfa hay. We also bale about 20,000 bales of wheat straw and market about 40,000 bales of pine straw annually. In addition to this, we recently opened a farmers market in a nearby community. We grow and sell flowers, produce and our own farm raised beef.

I have been putting strings around plant fiber since I graduated from WKU in 1988. I wanted to farm, but it was difficult to get started after the farm crisis of the 80's, so I bought a \$1500 baler and started baling straw and selling to small markets in Nashville Tn. My philosophy was then, and still is today, that to break into an industry, you do what no one else wants to, or is willing to do. In 1999, I grew my first 10 acres of alfalfa. Since then I have grown to 80 acres. I haul the majority of our hay to buyers in Georgia and Florida. I bring back pine straw and sell to landscapers. The main thing that I tell people about growing alfalfa is that it is not for the faint of heart. The learning

curve is steep. I just completed my 15th crop and would just barely declare myself a competent producer.

Minos or Glenn Cox – Caldwell County Hay Producers

Our operation consists of 130 acres of pure stand alfalfa. I have 90 acres of new stand of Roundup Ready sowed in April of 2014 which should be excellent this year. Alfalfa is cut anywhere from four to six times per year depending on the weather for that year. Alfalfa is baled in small squares weighing sixty pounds per bale with most being tested by Kentucky Department of Agriculture and is sold mostly to horse people locally along with sales in most of the southern states. We have been producing Alfalfa for 25 to 30 years and strive to have a quality product. Stands usually last 5 to 6 years. The remaining acreage is leased out for crop production. Back in time we were rather large in pork production but have not had any swine in about 7 years.